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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 SAJ-01 IO-10 /076 W
---------- 008614
R 011039Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0857
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

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E'O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: ANDRE BORD BECOMES UDR SECRETARY GENERAL WHILE
JACQUES CHIRAC REASSERTS GAULLIST LEADERSHIP

REF: PARIS 15549

SUMMARY. STATE SECRETARY FOR VETERANS ANDRE BORD WAS ELECTED UDR
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SECRETARY GENERAL JUNE 28 AGAINST NO OPPOSITION BY A

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MAJORITY NEARLY AS BIG AS CHIRAC'S LAST FEBRUARY. CHIRAC TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE UDR COUNCIL MEETING TO LIBERALIZE THE UDR'S IMAGE. END SUMMARY.

1. TO NO ONE'S SURPRISE, THE UDR NATIONAL COUNCIL MET ON JUNE 28 AND ELECTED ANDRE BORD TO REPLACE PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC AS THE PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL. BORD RECEIVED 823 (89.65 PERCENT) OF 9L8 VOTES CAST; LAST FEBRUARY CHIRAC GOT 847 (92.56 PERCENT) OF 915 VOTES CAST.

2. BORD, A NO-NONSENSE, HARD-WORKING BUT COLORLESS GAULLIST SINCE 1947 HAS BEEN A MINISTER CONTINUOUSLY SINCE 1966 UNDER FIVE PRIME MINISTERS' FIRST HOLDING THE PORTFOLIO OF STATE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR AND, SINCE 1972, MINISTER AND LATER STATE SECRETARY FOR VETERANS. HIS EXPERIENCE IN THE INTERIOR MINISTRY WILL SURELY BE HELPFUL TO HIM IN HIS CULTIVATION OF THE FRENCH ELECTORAL TERRAIN. HIS FIRST ACT ON SATURDAY AS UDR SECRETARY GENERAL WAS TO DECLARE HIS COMPLETE LOYALTY TO CHIRAC AND HIS INTENTION TO PRESERVE UDR PREDOMINANCE WITHIN GISCARDIAN MAJORITY.

3. LIKE HIS PREDECESSOR CHIRAC, BORD IS NOW WEARING TWO HATS: GOVERNMENT MINISTER AND UDR SECRETARY GENERAL. WHILE CHIRAC WAS FREQUENTLY CRITICIZED WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE UDR FOR HOLDING BOTH JOBS, BORD, WITH ONE OF THE LESS IMPORTANT PORTFOLIOS, WILL BE LESS SUSCEPTIBLE TO THESE CRITICS. IN FACT, HE INDICATED DURING THE WEEKEND UDR NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING THAT HE DOES NOT INTEND TO DROP HIS VETERANS' JOB, NOTING THAT HE IS NOT THE ONLY MINISTER TO HEAD A POLITICAL MOVEMENT -- A CLEAR ALLUSION TO PONIATOWSKI. IN THE CURRENT WAVE OF RUMORS OF A CABINET RESHUFFLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, HOWEVER, THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT GISCARD MAY FEEL OTHERWISE AND TAKE BORD'S MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO AWAY FROM HIM.

4. SIGNIFICANTLY, THE ASSEMBLED GAULLIST POLITICOS

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PAID AS MUCH OR MORE ATTENTION TO CHIRAC'S SPEECH
THAN TO BORD'S. THE PRIME MINISTER SURPRISED HIS
LISTENERS BY VIGOROUSLY CONDEMNING UNNAMED SPEAKERS AT
THE RECENT NICE UDR ASSIZES JUNE 14-15 (REFTEL) FOR
GIVING THE "FALSE" IMPRESSION THAT THE UDR IS A RIGHT-
WING PARTY. CHIRAC EXHORTED GAULLIST MILITANTS TO
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WORK HARDER TO GAIN CONVERTS IN FACTORIES AND AMONG

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WOMEN AND YOUTH.

5. COMMENT. CHIRAC'S STRONG, ALMOST MENACING TONE REPRESENTS FIRST AND FOREMOST A RIPOSTE TO INTERIOR MINISTER MICHEL PONIATOWSKI. THE PRIME MINISTER DOES NOT SUBSCRIBE TO PONIA'S HOPES OF ENTICING PART OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY PIECEMEAL INTO GISCARD'S CAMP, AND HE SENTS PONIA'S RECENT ATTEMPTS TO PORTRAY THE IR AS THE UDR'S EQUAL IN IMPORTANCE WITHIN THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY. CHIRAC CLEARLY INTENDS TO BUILD ON THE OLD PENCHANT OF SOME GAULLISTS FOR "LEFT-WING" SOCIAL ACTIVISM, THEREBY APPEALING TO A WIDER SEGMENT OF VOTERS AND IN THE PROCESS STEALING PONIA'S THUNDER. AS A UDR OFFICIAL CLOSE TO EMBOFF REMARKED SOMETIME AGO, "THE PUBLIC IS BEGINNING TO SEE THE IR TO THE RIGHT OF THE UDR -- EXACTLY WHERE WE WANT IT TO BE." END COMMENT.
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Type: TE
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